

Message Text

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65

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SCCT-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 /065 W
----- 122579

R 091516Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9939

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAIRO 1717

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EG

SUBJECT: POLICE CRACK DOWN ON PRIVATE SECTOR FRAUD

1. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS, AN EX-GOE UNDERSECRETARY WAS BEATEN TO DEATH FEBRUARY 6 BY PROPRIETOR OF SHOP IN SHAWARIK STREET IN DOWNTOWN CAIRO. REPORTEDLY, HE HAD ENDEAVORED RETURN LOCALLY-MADE SHIRT WHICH HAD BEEN SOLD HIS WIFE AS HIGH-QUALITY IMPORTED COMMODITY.

2. SHAWARIB STREET IS BLOCK LONG STREET LINE WITH SMALL PRIVATE SECTOR SHOPS SPECIALIZING IN EXPENSIVE IMPORTED GOODS. IT HAS BEEN, EVEN BEFORE OCTOBER WAR, SYMBOL OF LUXURY LIVING AND HAS RECENTLY OBTAINED REPUTATION NOT ONLY FOR SERVING "PARASITICAL" NEW RICH CLASS, BUT ALSO FOR QUALITY OF FRAUD PERPETRATED ON CUSTOMERS WHO OFTEN ARE GULLED INTO BUYING SHODDY LOCAL GOODS WITH FOREIGN LABEL.

3. GOE REACTED RAPDILY TO MURDER. SHOPS, WHICH ARE NORMALLY CLOSED SUNDAYS, WERE CLOSED BY GOVERNMENT ORDER MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9. IN ORDER AVOID TIME-CONSUMING LEGAL REQUIREMENTS,
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GOVERNOR OF CAIRO ISSUED MILITARY ORDER (IN HIS CAPACITY AS

MILITARY GOVERNOR OF CAIRO) TO CLOSE ENTIRE STREET. MONDAY MORNING, OFFICIALS FROM CUSTOMS AUTHORITY, HEALTH AUTHORITY, AND COMMERCIAL FRAUD UNITS HAD BEEN DISPATCHED TO SWEEP THROUGH SHOPS ON STREET. POLICE TRUCKS WERE SEEN REMOVING GOODS FROM AREA; PRESUMABLY THESE WERE COMMODITIES WHICH WERE MISLABELED OR SMUGGLED. STREET IS CORDONED OFF, SHOPS ARE CLOSED, AND CIVILIANS ARE PROHIBITED ACCESS. GROUPS OF ABOUT 50 ARE GATHERED AT EACH END, BUT SEEM ONLY TO BE QUIETLY WATCHING GOVERNMENT OPERATION.

4. GOVERNOR OF CAIRO'S ACTION IN EVOKING HIS MILITARY POWERS REFLECTS IMPORTANCE OF THIS EVENT FOR GOE. WITH SHAWARIB MERCHANTS REPUTATION FOR FRAUD AND HIGH PRICES AND WITH LEVEL OF SOCIAL DISTRESS ON THE INCREASE. GOE OBVIOUSLY THOUGHT CRACK-DOWN NECESSARY TO DEMONSTRATE GOE'S CONCERN FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS AS WELL AS ITS DETERMINATION TO PREVENT ANY CIVIL DISTURBANCE. GOE IS PERHAPS FORTUNATE THAT STUDENTS ARE ON VACATION UNTIL FEBRUARY 14. EILTS

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